

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PEPR, SW, PL
SUBJECT: POLISH-SWEDISH RELATIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE AHLMARK CASE

REF: STOCKHOLM 3396

1. THE PER AHLMARK INCIDENT (REFTEL) HAS PRECIPITATED A HIGH-LEVEL AND SHARP INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE SWEDISH AND POLISH GOVERNMENTS. IN THE IMMEDIATE WAKE OF THE INCIDENT, MFA SECGEN LEIF LEIFLAND SUMMONED POLISH AMBASSADOR CIESLAR TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMING HIM THAT THE GOS FOUND IT "UNACCEPTABLE" THAT THE POLES WOULD PLACE BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF OFFICIAL VISITS SUCH AS THAT UNDERTAKEN BY AHLMARK AND HIS AIDES.
2. ON SEPTEMBER 5, AMBASSADOR CIESLAR PRESENTED GOP'S WRITTEN RESPONSE WHICH STATED: "POLAND HAS THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO PREVENT ALL UNDESIRABLE PERSONS FROM ENTERING POLAND. BY THIS, WE MEAN PERSONS WHO BY THEIR ACTIVITIES OR INTERFERENCE DAMAGE POLISH INTERESTS. THIS PRINCIPLE IS APPLIED WITHOUT RESPECT TO NATIONALITY, RACE, OR COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE. IT IS ALSO IN ACCORD WITH THE SWEDISH-POLISH NO-VISA AGREEMENT."

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3. GOS PUBLIC REACTION TO THE POLISH STATEMENT HAS BEEN SWIFT AND TOUGH, THOUGH GOS OFFICIALS ARE QUIETLY ATTEMPTING NOT TO LET THE AFFAIR POISON THE OTHERWISE PRODUCTIVE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. LEIF LEIFLAND CALLED THE OFFICIAL POLISH REPLY "UNSATISFACTORY" AND NOTED IT CONTAINED NOT A SINGLE WORD OF REGRET. HE UNDERScoreD THE FACT THAT THE GOS WILL BE BACK TO THE POLES ON THE

MATTER. PM FALLDIN, WHO VISITED POLAND IN APRIL AND OBTAINED WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT FROM THE POLES ON HOW TO HANDLE THESE CASES, ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER TERMED THE POLISH REPLY "DEEPLY UNSATISFACTORY" AND CALLED FOR FURTHER TALKS WITH THE POLES TO SEE WHETHER THEY SHOW ANY GIVE. ON THE BASIS OF THESE CONTACTS, THE SWEDES WILL DECIDE WHAT FURTHER STEPS TO TAKE. MEANWHILE, FALLDIN NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT AT PRESENT CONSIDERING ABROGATION OF THE NO-VISA AGREEMENT, AS AHLMARK AND SOME IN THE MEDIA HAVE DEMANDED.

4. THE POLES HAVE SUPPORTED THEIR ARGUMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION BY TELLING THE SWEDES THAT OF 3,000 POLISH JEWS TO EMIGRATE TO SWEDEN IN 1968-69, ONLY 300 WERE ON THEIR LIST OF "UNDERSIRABLES." THE SWEDISH PRESS HAS PICKED UP THESE FIGURES (NEITHER THE SWEDISH NOR POLISH GOVERNMENTS HAD WANTED THIS LEAKED) AND IS REFERRING TO IT AS "THE BLACKLIST." THE POLES DIVIDE THE BLACKLISTED 300 INTO TWO CATEGORIES: (1) THOSE WHO ALLEGEDLY HELD KEY POSITIONS IN THE POLISH SECURITY APPARATUS DURING THE STALINIST PERIOD AND FOR WHOM THE POLISH GOVERNMENT CANNOT GUARANTEE SECURITY, AND (2) THOSE INVOLVED IN ANTI-POLISH ACTIVITIES IN SWEDEN. ACCORDING TO POLISH REASONING, SINCE ONLY 10 PERCENT OF THOSE EMIGRATING IN '68-'69 ARE DENIED ENTRY, IT CANNOT BE REGARDED AS DISCRIMINATION. THE SWEDES HAVE NOT FAILED
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TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY JEWS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THIS PROCEDURE.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT SWEDISH-POLISH RELATIONS HAVE FURTHER SOURED AS RESULT OF THE AHLMARK INCIDENT. THE SWEDES HAD HOPED TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM THROUGH THE FALLDIN-GIEREK MEETING IN WARSAW LAST APRIL AND THEREBY RESTORE MOMENTUM TO THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. MFA SOURCES HAVE CONFESSED THEIR FAILURE. YET BOTH SIDES HAVE LIVED WITH THE ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM FOR THE BETTER PART OF A YEAR NOW AND HAVE MANAGED TO KEEP THE POT FROM COOKING OVER TO MORE PRODUCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP. NO DOUBT THEY WILL TRY TO DO SO THIS TIME AS WELL. POLISH-SWEDISH RELATIONS RUN DEEP WITH A SURPRISINGLY LARGE NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES. ONE MFA SOURCE CONFIDED THIS WEEK THAT SWEDEN HAS MORE MINISTERIAL EXCHANGES WITH POLAND THAN WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING ITS NORDIC NEIGHBORS. IT IS A PROFITABLE RELATIONSHIP FOR THE SWEDES AND ONE THEY WOULD LIKE TO KEEP ON TRACK. NEVERTHELESS, THE SWEDES ARE CONCERNED THAT CONTINUED POLISH INTRANSIGENCE SET AGAINST MOUNTING DOMESTIC PRESSURES IN SWEDEN IS MAKING IT PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL THE

FALLOUT. THREE MINISTERIAL VISITS TO POLAND ARE IN THE PLANNING STAGES FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, AND IT IS HOPED THAT THE PUBLIC CLAMOR WILL SUBSIDE IN TIME FOR THEM TO PROCEED AS SCHEDULED.

6. OUR MFA FRIENDS HAVE EXPRESSED TO US THEIR ANNOYANCE AT PER AHLMARK WHO SOME BELIEVE INTENTIONALLY PROVOKED THE INCIDENT. IT IS SAID THAT AT LEAST ONE OF THE AHLMARK AIDES WHO WAS TURNED BACK IS A WELL-KNOWN ANTI-POLISH ACTIVIST. ODDLY ENOUGH, HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN ADMITTED TO POLAND ON EARLIER ATTEMPTS.

7. THE SWEDES ARE NOT REALLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GETTING THE POLES TO SHIFT ATTITUDES ON THE MATTER. THE BEST
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THEY HOPE FOR IS THAT THE POLES WOULD SCALE DOWN THE LIST OF 300 WHICH THE SWEDES REGARD AS NEEDLESSLY HIGH. INDEED, THE SWEDES HAD SIGNS THAT THE POLES WERE ABOUT TO GIVE ON THIS WHEN THE AHLMARK CASE BROKE AND THE POLISH SPINE STIFFENED UNDER PRESSURE. MFA SOURCES NOW HOPE THAT, GIVEN A DECENT INTERVAL, THE LIST WILL IN FACT BE TRIMMED. IN THE MEANTIME, POLISH-SWEDISH RELATIONS WILL BE A GAME OF "DAMAGE LIMITATION."
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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